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TAGS: [ASEC](#) [PTER](#) [BY](#)
SUBJECT: SECURITY ENVIRONMENT PROFILE QUESTIONNAIRE
BUJUMBURA, BURUNDI - SPRING 2008

REF: A. STATE 13023
[1](#)B. 2006 KAMPALA 1804
[1](#)C. 2006 BUJUMBURA 805

Classified By: Charge, JoAnne Wagner; Reasons 1.5 (c) 1.

1.(U) Embassy Bujumbura's responses are keyed to reftel A:

(U) POLITICAL VIOLENCE

[1](#)I. (U) DEMONSTRATIONS

[1](#)A. (U) Anti-American sentiments are not pervasive within any of Burundi's ethnic or religious communities. The ruling CNDD-FDD party received monetary and political support from Sudan during Burundi's 1993-2005 civil war. Sudanese support continues, invigorated by a May 2007 visit by Sudanese Head of State Omar al-Bashir to Burundi. Burundi has a small, moderate Muslim minority. This minority is almost entirely located within Bujumbura and is strongly factionalized. The former head of the ruling CNDD-FDD political party, Hussein Radjabu, is a Muslim who has previously made the pilgrimage to Mecca. Radjabu has courted and received monetary support from Islamic nations such as Saudi Arabia, Libya, the Sudan and Iraq in the past. In April, 2007 Radjabu was arrested and sentenced to 13 years for sedition; he is appealing his conviction. Allegedly, Radjabu was recruiting former rebels for the purpose of destabilizing the current government. Despite being a prisoner, Radjabu maintains influence and some control over his Muslim loyalists. The real extent of Radjabu's resources, authority and potential is unknown, as is his exact disposition with respect to the United States. That said he likely retains some ability to influence the political and religious environment.

Overall Burundi's Muslim population is of the more tolerant variety. Many of Burundi's Muslims originate from either India or Pakistan and are active within their ethnic communities, which also include many Christians.

i. There have been no anti-American demonstrations within the last 12 months.

ii. There have been no anti-American demonstrations near or in front of U.S. diplomatic facilities within the last 12 months.

iii. There have been no anti-American demonstrations of any size within the last 12 months.

iv. There have been no anti-American demonstrations as a result of U.S. foreign policy initiatives, military actions, or domestic issues within the last 12 months.

[1](#)B. (U) Demonstrations are infrequent, are generally

nonviolent and are well controlled by the police. However, any demonstration or spontaneous gathering has the potential to become violent. For example, in March 2008, a United Nations car transporting an American citizen employee was stopped by former UN workers protesting a contract termination. When the driver tried to push the vehicle through the crowd, the demonstrators attacked the vehicle with rocks. The vehicle was badly damaged but no one was injured. Similarly, in July, disgruntled ex-UN workers staged two simultaneous grenade attacks on UN vehicles. In September motorcycle taxi drivers staged a violent demonstration against new licensing restrictions. They damaged passing vehicles and temporarily shut down traffic in the center of town until the demonstration was violently dispersed by the police.

i. There have been no violent demonstrations that have resulted in damage to USG property or injuries to USG personnel.

ii. There have been no violent demonstrations that have penetrated the perimeter security line.

1C. (U) In May, 2008 students demonstrated at UNESCO, the Ministry of Education and the president's office to demand unpaid allowances promised by the government. Students threw stones, injuring two of their own and one police officer. The police fired live ammunition into the air and launched tear gas to disperse the mob.

i. This student protest took place one block away from the United States Embassy, and on the same street.

ii. Each of the two demonstrations in this reporting period numbered between 100 and 200 participants.

iii. Demonstrations have been generally nonviolent and well controlled by the police, with no damage to USG property. However, any demonstration or spontaneous gathering has the potential to become violent.

iv. Anti-government demonstrations did not result in damage to USG property.

II. (C) MACRO CONFLICT CONDITIONS

1A. (C) The Burundian government is working to finally resolve a protracted intrastate conflict and is currently attempting to implement the last details of a ceasefire agreement with the FNL, the country's remaining rebel group. The FNL and the GoB signed a cease-fire agreement in September 2006, but in April 2008, the FNL staged simultaneous small unit attacks with small arms and mortars on police and military position around the capital of Bujumbura. When the FNL fired 130mm rockets into the city a few days later, the military began to drive the rebels from their previous positions surrounding the city. After 20 days of daily fighting in the areas surrounding Bujumbura a new cease-fire declaration was signed, followed by subsequent declarations detailing timelines for implementing the ceasefire. The FNL has made some movements towards beginning the demobilization process, but its commitment to the process remains suspect. The bulk of the individuals who have begun reporting to the demobilization camps is believed to be new recruits; the majority of the FNL's actual fighters remain in the field. The conflict has again assumed the characteristics of the low-level insurgency it resembled prior to the fighting in April 2008. The FNL has frequently engaged in small clashes with FDN (Burundi National Defense Forces) and police positions, mostly in response to FNL criminal rather than insurgent related activity. Looting, ambushes against vehicles, extortion, armed robbery and grenade attacks against the civilian population are the continuing and preferred method of obtaining logistical support for the FNL in the field. The FNL is again active in the area surrounding Bujumbura but this may be a last attempt to gather logistics in advance of demobilization. Further fighting is possible but not expected at this time.

¶B. (C) The FNL generally have freedom of movement throughout the interior of the country; however they are more concentrated around Bujumbura in Bujumbura Rural, the northern regions of Cibitoke and Bubanza, and the southern regions near Nyanza Lac.

¶C. (C) There are no U.S. diplomatic facilities located in these regions, other than in Bujumbura, the capital.

¶D. (C) No factions have specifically targeted American interests or advocated an anti-American political philosophy or orientation.

III. (S) HOST COUNTRY CAPABILITIES

¶A. (S) Burundi's National Police (PNB) is staffed by former rebel fighters, police and gendarmerie. The majority of the police force has just completed its first formal week-long training course in basic human rights and policing. Two more week-long courses are underway but the average police officer still has had little training. Mid-level officers have some training but do not aggressively seek to enforce the law without specific orders to do so. The highest echelon of the PNB is well-educated and well-trained but seems unable to pass relevant knowledge to their subordinates.

In general, the level of professionalism and competence is sufficient to deter petty criminal activity where police are continuously present in sufficient numbers. In cases of more serious crimes not committed in the actual presence of police, reaction times are too slow to help the victims; serious investigations are only undertaken in the most notable cases and legitimate prosecution rare. In fact, serious crimes are often attributed to the police, other government actors, or the FNL. The police are not generally active outside of cities during hours of darkness so criminals operate in rural areas with impunity at night.

Although the investigative capacity of Burundian law enforcement personnel is very limited, they are cooperative, willing to learn and generally eager to assist the U.S.

¶B. (S) The second officer of the PNB to attend the Investigator Training Program at the FBI National Academy has recently graduated. Efforts are underway to enroll officers of the PNB and inspectors into the International Law Enforcement Academy (ILEA) in Botswana. Officers have already attended a drug course and a cyber-crime course at ILEA. Although Post's training initiatives are still in their infancy, PNB effectiveness and willingness to cooperate have improved. The PNB have also received significant training from the UN, the Netherlands, China, France, Belgium and Egypt.

¶C. (S) Corruption is widespread throughout the PNB. The assimilation of demobilized rebels from various groups active during the civil war undermines the capabilities of the PNB. Low pay, inadequate training and the fact that many current police formerly made their living through criminal means have created a situation in which crimes are committed without consequences and in some cases the police are implicated in criminal activity.

¶D. (S) The host country intelligence service (Service Nationale de Renseignement (SNR)) may be capable of deterring transnational terrorist activity. However, the SNR focuses its efforts more on influencing national politics in favor of the ruling party rather than on monitoring potential external threats. It is additionally burdened by issues similar to those confronting the National Police. The SNR is allegedly behind assassinations of local businessmen, opponents of the ruling party and other persons.

¶E. (S) Host country intelligence services have been cooperative in the past on those rare occasions when the Embassy has had to ask for assistance. In general, however, rumors that those at the head of the SNR are deeply involved

in extra-judicial actions including assassination, detentions and intimidation cause the Embassy to limit its interaction with the intelligence service.

¶F. (S) Burundi was specifically threatened by Somalia-based terror groups for its participation in the African Union's peacekeeping mission in Somalia (AMISOM). Although Post is unaware of any major GoB anti-terrorism successes, they have vigorously pursued investigations into individuals or events suspected of being linked to terror when prodded by the international community.

¶G. (S) The host country is generally responsive to U.S. requests to provide additional police forces for protective security functions. Our requests are limited to providing a few extra police for large social occasions and occasional protective motorcades. Post does not utilize local police as bodyguards.

¶H. (S) Post assesses the overall security of Bujumbura's International Airport as good/average. Airport security has improved significantly over the past year. The international airport complies with international standards. In the event of conflict the UN mission currently in Burundi would augment security at the airport and on the road leading to the airport. Should the security environment deteriorate, small arms fire from FNL forces directed against commercial passenger and cargo aircraft is likely.

¶I. (S) Burundian customs officials and immigration agencies are generally thought to be ineffective and corrupt. It is easy to obtain fraudulent Burundian or regional identity documents and passports. The Bujumbura international airport is considered to be the easiest place regionally to pass fraudulent documents en route to Europe. The airlines have recently employed contractors who scrutinize travel documents and as a result security has tightened significantly.

¶J. (S) Border patrol forces are ineffective. Burundi's borders are porous. The border police typically exercise control only at official entry and exit points. Uncontrolled foot and waterborne traffic from neighboring countries is commonplace. Border security has improved in response to specific terror threats against the GoB, and consequently some individuals have recently been detained attempting to cross the border illegally.

INDIGENOUS TERRORISM

¶I. (SBU) ANTI-AMERICAN TERRORIST GROUPS

¶A. (SBU) There are no indigenous anti-American terrorist groups in Burundi. The FNL is a Hutu-dominated rebel group which could conceivably harbor a grievance against the U.S. for its support of the Tutsi-led government in neighboring Rwanda; at this time there is no indication that this is the case.

¶B. There have been no attacks against American targets in Burundi.

¶C. There have been no attacks against American targets in Burundi.

¶D. There have been no attacks against American targets in Burundi.

¶E. There have been no attacks against American targets in Burundi.

¶F. There have been no attacks against American targets in Burundi.

¶G. There are no indigenous anti-American terrorist groups in Burundi.

II. (SBU) OTHER INDIGENOUS TERRORIST GROUPS

1A. (SBU) The FNL (formerly PALIPEHUTU-FNL) is the only indigenous group being tracked by Post that might be considered a terrorist organization. The government of Burundi informally considers the FNL a terrorist group, and has used the threat of formally labeling as such as leverage during ongoing peace negotiations. At present, the FNL is generally considered a &negative force,⁸ and not a terrorist group.

1B. (SBU) In April 2008 the FNL used small arms and mortars to stage simultaneous small unit attacks on police and military positions. These attacks took place within two km of Embassy housing. A few days later the FNL fired three 130 mm rockets into the city. One of the rounds landed within 400 m of two Embassy residences, another rocket landed within 400 m of a separate Embassy residence. Embassy residences were not the target of the attacks, but their relative proximity to high-profile targets and the gross inaccuracy of the rockets put the properties in the line of fire.

1C. (SBU) The April attacks were indiscriminate and lethal; over 100 people were killed.

1D. (SBU) To date, Americans have not been killed or injured in FNL attacks.

TRANSNATIONAL TERRORISM

1I. (S/NF) TRANSNATIONAL TERRORIST INDICATORS

1A. (S/NF) In 2008, the GoB received specific threats against the government and president of Burundi from the Somalia-based terror group Al-Shabaab for the country's support of the AMISOM mission. In September 2006 Post became aware of surveillance being conducted on our facilities by Al-Ittihad Al-Islami, an East Africa-oriented Al-Qaeda-affiliated group (reftel B and C). The size and activities of these groups in Burundi are unknown.

1B. (S/NF) Al-Shabaab is an operational organization that has threatened to attack in Burundi. Post believes that AL-Shabaab lacks the resources to stage an attack in Burundi at this time. The group has carried out lethal attacks on Burundian troops in Somalia and will likely continue to focus their efforts there. Post assesses Al-Ittihad Al-Islami as an operational group limited in its activities and potential at this time.

1C. (S/NF) The GoB is not sympathetic to extremist Islamist ideology. It is possible that the GoB is unaware that an Islamist terrorist group is operating in Burundi due to the GoB's limited control of its borders and investigative capabilities.

1D. (S/NF) It is unknown whether any NGOs operating in Burundi are affiliated with this group. Most NGOs operating in Burundi are affiliated with western nations. The activities or presence of Muslim or Middle Eastern NGOs is unknown, but not estimated to be significant. If there are Middle Eastern NGOs operating in Burundi it is possible that they could have a relationship with these groups.

1E. (S/NF) As noted in paragraph 2A, there is a Muslim minority active in Burundi. This minority is largely comprised of Indian and Pakistani expatriates. There are also some Sudanese and East African Muslims. The radical Islamic ideology of an Islamic terrorist group is not likely to appeal to the small moderate Muslim community here.

1F. (S/NF) Post assesses the level, intent and scope of hostile intelligence services in-country to be low. Hostile intelligence services are not particularly active in Burundi. However, Post has noted surveillance of official U.S. facilities perpetrated by apparent Chinese nationals on

several occasions. Within the government of Burundi, there are those who have links to Muslim countries in the Middle East, in particular to the former head of the CNDD-FDD political party Hussein Radjabu. It is unknown whether he has established a relationship with the intelligence services of these nations. Post has no direct information to indicate that a relationship between Burundi's intelligence services and those of Sudan has been established, but high ranking officials in the SNR admit that lack of contact with western nations may drive them to seek other partners. Considering the relationship between the two countries, it would be unwise to rule out such a relationship after high-level meetings between the presidents of Burundi and Sudan. In November of 2008 a discreet Iranian delegation met with the president of Burundi in Bujumbura. Reports suggest that the delegation was soliciting votes against an anti-Iranian resolution in the UN Security Council but what the GoB was offered for its support is unknown.

1G. (S/NF) Weapons and explosives are readily available in Burundi. The Burundian military and police do not adequately secure their weapons and ammunition, and rampant corruption means official weapons and ammunition are often used by criminals. The possibility that a terrorist group could obtain Burundian military and police weapons and explosives using overt or covert means is high. In late July 2008, a soldier working at a logistics base in Musaga attempted to sell 40 RPG-7 rockets and 600,000 rounds of AK-47 ammunition to the FNL. Burundi's porous borders provide an opportunity for weapons and explosives to be smuggled undetected from neighboring countries, including eastern neighbor Democratic Republic of Congo. The surrounding region is host to a vibrant black market in small arms and grenades, and weapons of this type are always available at low cost. Grenades and automatic weapons are in common use by criminals for crimes as petty as cell phone theft; it would be quite simple for a terrorist element to acquire a significant arsenal.

12. (U) Point of contact is RSO Christopher A. Bakken (257) 22-207-000 x7305

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